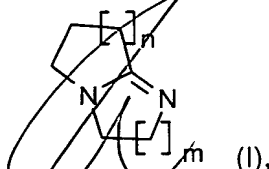


We claim:

1. A process for preparing  $\beta$ -alkoxynitriles by reacting  $\alpha, \beta$ -unsaturated nitriles with monohydric, dihydric or trihydric alcohols in the presence of basic catalysts at from -20 to +200°C, which comprises using a diazabicycloalkene catalyst of the formula I

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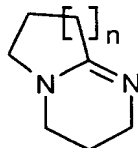
where from 1 to 4 hydrogen atoms may be independently replaced by the radicals  $R^1$  to  $R^4$ , in which case  $R^1$ ,  $R^2$ ,  $R^3$ ,  $R^4$  are each  $C_{1-20}$ -alkyl,  $C_{6-20}$ -aryl or  $C_{7-20}$ -arylalkyl, and

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~~$n$  and  $m$  are each an integer from 1 to 6.~~

2. A process as claimed in claim <sup>6</sup>1, wherein the catalyst used <sup>in the first step</sup> is a diazabicycloalkene of the formula Ia

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(Ia),

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<sup>on the diazabicycloalkene nucleus</sup> where from 1 to 4 hydrogen atoms may be independently replaced by the radicals  $R^1$  to  $R^4$ , in which case  $R^1$ ,  $R^2$ ,  $R^3$ ,  $R^4$  are each  $C_{1-20}$ -alkyl,  $C_{6-20}$ -aryl or  $C_{7-20}$ -arylalkyl, and

$n$  is an integer from 1 to 3.

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3. A process as claimed in claim <sup>6</sup>1, wherein the catalyst used <sup>in the first step</sup> is 1,5-diazabicyclo[4.3.0]non-5-ene (DBN), 1,5-diazabicyclo[4.4.0]dec-5-ene (DBD) or 1,8-diazabicyclo[5.4.0]undec-7-ene (DBU).

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4. A process as claimed in claim <sup>6</sup>1, wherein the catalyst <sup>in the first step</sup> is used in an amount of from 0.05 to 5% by weight, based on the alcohol.

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5. A process as claimed in claim <sup>6</sup>1, wherein the reaction <sup>in the first step</sup> is carried out at from 25 to 100°C.

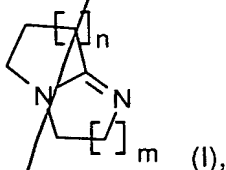
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5 91 6. A process for preparing  $\gamma$ -alkoxyamines by

a) reaction of  $\alpha,\beta$ -unsaturated nitriles with monohydric, dihydric or trihydric alcohols in the presence of basic catalysts at from  $-20$  to  $+200^\circ\text{C}$  to form  $\beta$ -alkoxynitriles, and

b) subsequent hydrogenation of the  $\beta$ -alkoxynitriles in the presence of a hydrogenation catalyst,

10 which comprises using in the first step a diazabicycloalkene catalyst of the formula I as set forth in claim 1



20 where from 1 to 4 hydrogen atoms may be independently replaced by the radicals  $R^1$  to  $R^4$ , in which case  $R^1$ ,  $R^2$ ,  $R^3$ ,  $R^4$  are each  $C_{1-20}$ -alkyl,  $C_{6-20}$ -aryl or  $C_{7-20}$ -arylalkyl, and

25 n and m are each an integer from 1 to 6, and effecting the hydrogenation in the second step in the presence of a hydrogenation catalyst and of the catalyst of the formula I.

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